

July 2019

Dear Brethren,

In spite of conditions deteriorating around the world, all of us here in Maryville, Tennessee, give a very warm and special greeting to all of you. Our prayers and thoughts are with you continually as we hold fast to the revealed Truth in these troubled times. In this month of July, what is our *declaration of independence* before God in this troubled world?

Of all the holidays in this world that we can celebrate, the Fourth of July celebration is about the only manmade holiday native to America. Most all others were born out of pagan beliefs of the past. But who today even remembers what our Declaration of Independence says? A survey taken in the 1970s in New York revealed that only eleven out of fifty people could answer correctly the meaning of the Fourth of July, and no one could recite the first line, which is seventy-one words long.

This is what it says: "When in the Course of human events, it becomes necessary for one people to dissolve the political bands which have connected them with another, and to assume among the powers of the earth, the separate and equal station to which the Laws of Nature and of Nature's God entitle them, a decent respect to the opinions of mankind requires that they should declare the causes which impel them to separation."

This, believe it or not, was done according to God's will. As Herbert Armstrong said in his booklet, *The United States & Britain in Prophecy*, when Jacob adopted Joseph's sons, Ephraim and Manasseh, as his own, he said Ephraim would become a leader of a company or commonwealth of nations, and Manasseh, the firstborn, would become a leader of one great nation, the USA. For this to happen, the USA had to separate itself from the British Commonwealth, which was accomplished on June 11, 1776, about two hundred forty-three years ago, when the Declaration of Independence was drawn up.

You may not be able to quote one line from our Declaration of Independence at this moment, but notice one particular phrase; it is in the last paragraph which says: ". . . we mutually pledge to each other our Lives, our Fortunes and our sacred Honor."

Now you probably recall these impressive words, but you do not really understand them until you know the fate of the fifty-six men who signed our nation's Declaration of Independence.

In this *Monthly Letter*, we will see what happened to the fifty-six men who pledged their lives, their fortunes and their sacred honor, according to Paul Harvey's book, *The Rest*

*of the Story.* As we read what happened to them, recognize that the same might happen to us as we strive to preserve and live by God's revealed Truth today.

On June 11, 1776, our forefathers sat down to draw up a Declaration of Independence. In it we were going to tell our British fatherland that we wanted no more rule by the Redcoats. We wanted our independence; we wanted freedom. So, to secure those rights, a famous document was composed and drawn up by:

- 1) Thomas Jefferson—Virginia
- 2) John Adams—Massachusetts
- 3) Roger Sherman—Connecticut
- 4) Philip Robert Livingston—New York
- 5) Benjamin Franklin—Pennsylvania

This pact, as Senator Burke later put it, was a partnership between the living and the dead, and the yet unborn. Jefferson finished a draft of the document in seventeen days, and Congress adopted it unanimously on July 4, 1776 (two hundred forty-three years ago).

Now King George III of England had this reaction: He denounced all rebels in the colonies as traitors. Punishment for treason was hanging. So those fifty-six names that appeared on the Declaration of Independence were kept secret for six months because each signer knew the full meaning of that magnificent last paragraph in which his signature pledged his life, his fortune and his sacred honor.

Fifty-six men placed their names beneath that pledge; fifty-six men knew when they signed it that they were risking everything. They knew that if they won the fight, the best they could expect was years of hardship and a struggling nation; and if they lost, they would face a hangman's rope or worse. But they signed the pledge, and they did indeed pay the price as you will see.

- 1) The first to sign, Carter Braxton of Virginia, was a wealthy planter and trader who saw his ships swept from the seas. To pay his debts he lost his home and all of his properties and died in rags.
- 2) Thomas Lynch, Jr. was a third-generation rice grower and a large plantation owner. After he signed, his health failed, so he and his wife set sail for France to regain his health, but their ship never made it and he was never heard from again.
- 3) Thomas McKean of Delaware was so harassed by the enemy that he was forced to move his family five times in five months. With his family in poverty and in hiding, he served in Congress without pay.
- 4) Vandals looted the properties of William Ellery (Rhode Island), George Clymer (Pennsylvania), Lyman Hall (Georgia), Button Gwinett (Georgia), George Walton

(Georgia), Thomas Heyward (South Carolina), Edward Rutledge (South Carolina), and Arthur Middleton (South Carolina).

- 5) Thomas Nelson, Jr. of Virginia, raised two million dollars on his own signature to provision our allies and the French Fleet; and after the war he personally paid back the loans, wiped out his entire estate and no, he was never reimbursed by his government. But in the final battle for Yorktown, Nelson urged General Washington to fire on his own home which was occupied by the enemy. He died bankrupt. Thomas Nelson, Jr. had pledged his life, his fortune and his sacred honor.
- 6) The Hessians seized the home of Francis Hopkinson of New Jersey. Francis Lewis of New York, had his home and everything destroyed. His wife was imprisoned and died within a few months.
- 7) Richard Stockton of New Jersey, was captured and mistreated, and his health broken to the extent that he died. His estate was pillaged by the enemy.
- 8) Thomas Hayward, Jr. of South Carolina, was captured and imprisoned when Charleston fell.
- 9) And then there was John Hart of New Jersey. John Hart was driven from his wife's bedside while she was dying. Their thirteen children fled for their lives in all directions. His fields and grist mills were laid waste. For more than a year he hid out in the forest and caves and returned home after the war to find his wife dead, his children gone and his property destroyed. He died a few weeks later of exhaustion and a broken heart.
- 10) Lewis Morris of New York, also saw his land destroyed and his family scattered.
- 11) Philip Livingston of New York, died within a few months because of the hardships of the war.
- 12) John Hancock, one of the wealthiest men of New England, stood outside Boston one terrible night of the war and said: "Burn Boston, though it makes John Hancock a beggar, if the public good requires it." He had pledged his life, his fortune and sacred honor, and he too lived up to that pledge.
- 13) Of the gallant fifty-six men, few were long to survive. Five were captured by the British and tortured before they died.
- 14) Twelve others had their homes—from Rhode Island to Charleston—sacked and looted, occupied by the enemy or burned.

- 15) Two of them lost sons in the army. One had two sons captured. Nine of the fifty-six died in the war from its hardships or more merciful bullets.

They paid the price! And freedom was born. This is not to say these men were righteous in the sight of God, but God was the One who used them to fulfill His will. That new independence provided the opportunity for God's true church in the twentieth century to be born and to spread around the world.

But how do we, the people of these United States, remember the Fourth of July? Blowing off fireworks or eating and drinking at picnics? Do we really appreciate their sacrifices so that we can have freedom today? What would these fifty-six men say if they could see us now? If they could see how we take for granted that precious freedom, and then turn it into license to commit sin and even to burn the American flag as some have done.

Why? Because people by nature do not want to be governed or to be forced to live by any moral code of conduct. They want to do what is right in their own eyes and to worship the god of their own minds. They have even gone so far now as to live perverted lifestyles God condemns in His Word. But, who in this new generation of young people have read God's Word or choose to live by it?

But do you know, that as the people of God, we have been given something much greater than the freedom to do what is right in our own eyes? The revealed Truth of God. A truth that really makes us free! A freedom that this nation knows nothing about, freedom from the captivity of sin. But it cost something. In fact, it cost a great deal for many of God's prophets who were mocked, scourged, imprisoned, stoned, sawn asunder, slain with the sword, and crucified on a stake. Why?

Justice is turned back, And righteousness stands afar off; For truth is fallen in the street, And equity cannot enter. So truth fails, And he who departs from evil makes himself a prey. Then the LORD saw it, and it displeased Him That there was no justice. He saw that there was no man, And wondered that there was no intercessor; Therefore His own arm brought salvation for Him; And His own righteousness, it sustained Him (Isaiah 59:14–16, *New King James Version*).

Mr. Herbert Armstrong sacrificed a lot to get this Truth of the Living God on the airwaves and out to the world. While preaching this Truth, he lost his wife and both his sons—one to death and one to Satan. When he died in 1986, the Church of God that he raised up became the enemy of Jesus Christ because it did not have a love of this Truth. The Worldwide Church of God became a harlot and has produced many illegitimate sons that have no love for God's Truth today.

How much do you love God's Truth? Are you prepared to give up your lives, your fortunes, and your sacred honor to preserve it? Do you love it enough to make a sacred pledge to live by it—to make your Declaration of Independence to live God's Way of Life no matter what the cost? Then you truly are converted and will not be offended when the time of testing comes.

Today, freedom has become a transgression against the true God—a time in Israel when everyone does that which is right in his own eyes (Judges 21:25). So, freedom can and is becoming a curse, used to rebel against government, especially God's government. William Penn had this to say: "Those who cannot be governed by God, will be ruled by tyrants."

God help us to use freedom to serve the true, Living God. This will take faith, but the reward is great.

These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off were assured of them, embraced them and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth. For those who say such things declare plainly that they seek a homeland. And truly if they had called to mind that country from which they had come out, they would have had opportunity to return. But now they desire a better, that is, a heavenly country. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for He has prepared a city for them (Hebrews 11:13–16, *NKJV*).

All of us can become great men, or persons of faith, if we will determine to use our freedom now to live God's Way of Life, no matter what men may do to us. As a result, we will receive the promises God made to those who are faithful to the end.

Your servant in the faith,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Richard W. Litz". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized initial 'R'.

Richard W. Litz